



Senator Feinstein Seeks Shutdown of
U.S. Coastal Drilling Proposal
August 12, 2005

Washington, DC – Charging that the Bush Administration is “not acting in good faith” regarding offshore oil drilling, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today urged the Interior Department to immediately end any efforts to extend 36 petroleum and natural gas leases along the Central and Southern California coast. The following is the text of a letter sent to Interior Secretary Gale Norton:

August 12, 2005

The Honorable Gale A. Norton
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Norton:

I am writing with concern and anger over the Mineral Management Service’s (MMS) decision to extend 36 leases off the coast of California.

According to the U.S. District Court decision in *California v. Norton* (2001), which was upheld by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, the applications to extend the leases are subject to review by the California Coastal Commission. Yesterday, the California Coastal Commission unanimously decided against allowing the extension of these 36 undeveloped gas and oil leases in U.S. waters off the state's central coast.

I read with shock and disappointment today that the Minerals Management Service did not bother to show up at this important meeting. I find their reluctance to show up at a critical meeting unacceptable.

As a result, I am now of the opinion that the MMS is not acting in good faith. I have watched MMS’ actions over the past six years and have come to the conclusion that the Agency is blatantly ignoring the strong opposition of California to drilling off the coast. It should be clear that past and future delay of ending the leases has and will continue to add to the overall cost. And to me the continued delay conveys a stonewalling attitude which is also unacceptable.

I want to express my firm opposition to offshore drilling and to let you know that I will do whatever I can legislatively to permanently end these leases. I would be happy to sit down

and meet with you to discuss the issue, but I cannot express too clearly my dismay at the manner in which MMS is proceeding.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator